2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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spread in the course of years through Beni country and the whole of Nupe, is the *gunnu*; the hill is known as *Gunnu* Hill; and the white sand is said to possess special healing properties (a claim which chemical analysis did not confirm). The *gunnu* priest of that village is regarded as the senior among all other *gunnu* priests, almost as the spiritual head of their fraternity; for at the beginning of the month of the *gunnu* celebrations every born *Ndazo* of Beni country makes a pilgrimage to *Gunnu* Hill, travelling by night and in secrecy, to salute and consult the local priest, and to collect a little of the sand and a few pebbles from the sacred place. The sand will later be used as medicine and for divining (in *hati* fashion); the pebbles will be placed on the place of sacrifice, and when the *Ndazo* opens the *gunnu* dance he will put one of the pebbles in his mouth.

These are all the tangible links between the myth and the ritual practice. We note that they apply only to the Beni subtribe, a section more closely united by kinship ties as well as politically,[1] so that the collaboration of the *gunnu* priests goes together with co-operation in other, secular spheres. In the rest of the country the religious collaboration and the myth sustaining it are alike unknown; at least, the myth might be known only sketchily, and would be quoted merely as a curious tale of no real consequence.

Apart from these few references to details of procedure, the myth offers only a vague and incongruous pedigree for the ritual itself; it merely relates certain mysterious happenings in the distant past, which seem to have no bearing on the aim or the general design of the ritual, and then concludes summarily—'And this was the beginning of the *gunnu*'. This kind of jumpy logic is of course not unfamiliar in the mythology of primitive peoples; its incongruity in the present case can be seen from these three instances. To begin with, so unique a feature as the *Ndazo* priesthood is completely omitted in the mythical account. Conversely, the arrival and death of the stranger and the whole notion of this saint-like personage, buried by God Himself, are in no way touched upon in the ceremony; indeed, they represent utterly alien features in the conceptual framework of Nupe religion. Characteristically, when the Nupe tell the story they have no other term to describe the character of the stranger than the Arabic word *wali* ('saint'). Finally, the crucial motif in the myth, leprosy, is without bearing upon the aim and design of the ritual. There are certain indirect and tenuous links: everywhere in Nupe (not

[1] I am referring to the old federation of the twelve Beni 'towns', which in some respects survived to the present day. See above, p. 70, and *A Black Byzantium*, p. 25.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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only among the Beni) the burial of lepers is the responsibility of the *gunnu* priests; and leprosy, as we know, is considered a 'disease of God', as the *gunnu* is a '*kuti* of God.' In their speculations about the meaning of the myth the Nupe indeed seize upon this last point. But they would only enlarge upon the terrifying aspects of leprosy and its divine preordainedness, being content to draw the parallel with a *kuti* equally powerful, dangerous, and divinely preordained. Their interest does not go further; none of my informants, for example, referred to the male-female principle believed to govern leprosy (and unrepresented in the ritual); nor did they attempt to relate the name *gunnu* to the name for leprosy, *Sokó 'gũ*, an etymological speculation which, from my knowledge of the Nupe ways of thinking, I should have expected. The Nupe, in brief, do not feel the need for any closely argued 'mythical charter' of their religious practices; and indeed, as I have stressed, the *gunnu* myth is altogether an exception.

A few informants offered me their theories about the derivation of the name *gunnu*. According to one the ritual was so called because of *egũ na dã miní 'nu õ na*, because of the 'red earth that is inside (the furrows) of hoeing'; according to another the reason was that, in the ritual, 'one reaches the end of the wandering, it is accomplished', *àgũ 'nu mã, nwa dà zo*; in a third interpretation *gunnu* was taken to be the word *nugũ* ('boundary', 'limits'), reversed.[1] The first version would merely bring out the character of the *gunnu* as a farmer's ritual; the other two versions go more deeply, alluding to the characteristic concern of the ritual with the completion of a phase, and with 'end' and 'renewal'. Even so, the arguments are specious ones, ignoring, for example, the tone structure of Nupe language. Let us call them what they are, a play upon words and mere speculation.

To turn to the ceremonial itself. It lasts for three to five days, according to the amount of food and drink which the people are able to accumulate. The celebration I observed in Doko started on the 17th of February and lasted until the 19th.[2] Like the *ɓiba*, the *gunnu* has an esoteric part, performed outside the village, in the secrecy of the *gunnu 'bà* ('*gunnu* place'), and a public one, performed on the village dancing ground. The congregation of the esoteric rite includes both older men and youths, the youngest being about 15. The *gunnu* place looks much like the places of

[1] Such reversals of bisyllabic nouns occur quite often in Nupe language; they turn the noun into the corresponding verb, so that *nugũ*, 'limit', would become *gũ(ɛ)-nu* 'reaching the limit', 'accomplish'.

[2] The date is not inflexible; in the same year the nearby village of Pichi celebrated the *gunnu* almost a month later, since the people had no 'leisure' before that, being kept busy by the collection of tax arrears.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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The different rituals are again in the charge of different officiants. 796x 793

Two of these are priests in the strict sense of the word—the *Ndazo* of the *gunnu*, whose office has the same miraculous connotation as elsewhere, and the hereditary priest of the *ketsá* ritual. The priestship of the remaining rituals goes with secular status, that is, with certain ranks vested in family heads and with the appropriate positions on the council of elders. Yet while the large majority of the Jebba ranks (eleven out of thirteen) are non-hereditary, being based on election and promotion, only one of these (a minor rank) entails a religious office, the rank *Ndace*, whose encumbent officiates in the *dzakó* ritual. The two hereditary ranks, on the other hand, *Ejukó* and *Tswanya*, are both linked with duties of priestship. The *Ejukó* is the guardian of the Chain of Tsoede and officiates in the corresponding ritual; he is at the same time an important member of the village council and was formerly its chief 'legal officer' as well, since the Chain of Tsoede figured prominently in the legal machinery of the country. The connection between religious and political office is even more pronounced in the case of the *Tswanya*. In the religious sphere he takes charge of the ritual *mamma*; in the secular sphere it is his privilege and duty to deputize for the (non-hereditary) village chief during an interregnum and to name the successor. In other words, he is an hereditary 'king-maker' who, as I have explained elsewhere, appears in all Nupe communities which are without hereditary chieftainship and whose investiture with a sacred office replaces the religious connotation which otherwise attaches to chieftainship itself.[1] As in Doko, then, religious and secular power are at once united and kept distinct, though in Jebba the separation is the more marked.

If the priestship of several rituals is thus linked with secular ranks, the same kind of link applies to the rituals as such. For two of these, the *gunnu* and *dzakó*, also form part of the funerary ceremonials for titled elders, being added to the rites known as 'Three Days' (after the burial) and 'Forty Days'.[2] Thus the *gunnu* is performed at the death of the chief, the *gunnu* priest, the *Tswanya* and *Ejukó*, and at the death of seven other elders; the *dzakó*, for the *Ndace* and two other elders. Only one rank is left out, that of *Kpotuy*, which was introduced relatively recently, having been copied from the hierarchy of ranks in the capital; being an innovation, it is also unconnected with the traditional usage.[3] When thus employed in the funerary ceremonial, the *dzakó* is greatly reduced in scale; the scale of the *gunnu* varies with the importance of the rank held by the deceased; the death of the chief, *Ndazo*, *Tswanya*, and an elder styled *Cece* commands the

796x 766

[1] See *A Black Byzantium*, pp. 52–3.
[2] See below, p. 122.
[3] This rank was not included in the thirteen mentioned above.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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full-scale performance, while in the remaining cases there is a mere suggestion of the ritual.

This association of two fixed rituals with the funerary ceremonial presents several puzzling features. To begin with, the distribution of the two rituals among the thirteen ranks of Jebba is strikingly uneven, ten ranks being linked with the *gunnu* and only three with the *dzakó*. This, I was told, was not always so; but a more even distribution was upset in the course of time, when certain ranks originally linked with the *dzakó* were allowed to lapse because at the death of the incumbents there happened to be no suitable successors. This may be so; during my stay in Jebba, for example, three minor ranks of the *dzakó* group (not counted among the thirteen) were in fact vacant, and several more may have completely disappeared. Even so, the fact remains that no attempt was made to even out the inequality, though this would present no difficulty in this non-hereditary rank system. Furthermore, the dual division on the grounds of the suitable funerary ceremonial extends, not only to the men holding the respective ranks, but to their whole 'house' (i.e. lineage); thus the Jebba people generally class any individual or family as belonging either to the *gunnuciži* or *dzakociži* (the '*gunnu* people' or the '*dzakó* people'). This fits in oddly with a rank system based mainly on election and promotion; for it would imply that whole kin groups might have to change their religious affiliation if their titled head is promoted from a rank belonging to one section to a rank belonging to the other, or if a new family head is elected to a rank, say, of the *dzakó* group while his predecessor belonged to the *gunnu* section. Such promotions and elections do in fact occur and, as might be expected, entail considerable confusion. Most puzzling of all, this comprehensive division of the population into ritual moieties seems to have no relevant consequences, religious or otherwise. At least, the only consequence ascribed to it is both incongruous and obscure. It was claimed by most informants that the sons of *gunnuci* families alone were formerly allowed to join in the esoteric part of the *gunnu*, while no such rule applied to the *dzakó*.[1] One informant, an old man of high rank belonging to the *dzakó* section, maintained that that ritual was similarly exclusive. Since the rule concerning the *gunnu* is no longer in force (if it ever existed), it was impossible to verify the respective information; the *dzakó* ceremonial I witnessed certainly failed to

[1] If this were true it would obviously mean that boys and young men originally admitted to the secret part of the *gunnu* might be excluded from it when their family head changed his rank, or that boys not previously admitted might suddenly acquire the necessary qualifications. Either contingency is difficult to credit.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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substantiate the other 'theory'. Indeed, I suspect that it is mere 'theory'—an attempt to lend neatness and logic to an unconvincing and haphazard division.

It should perhaps be added that there is no trace in Jebba of an original ethnic division of the kind which, in other Nupe communities, accounts for the divided 'ownership' of particular rituals. Nor does the situation elsewhere in Nupe furnish any clue. The association of rituals with the funeral ceremonial for elders occurs, so far as I can judge, only in the river valley. But the puzzling dual division does not occur outside Jebba. In Bele, a small village up-river belonging to the same sub-tribe, Gbedegi, the two main local rituals, *gunnu* and *žiba*, are performed together at the death of all elders. In Mokwa, another Gbedegi town, a short distance from the river, the majority of rankholders are given a *gunnu* funeral; at the death of the *Sheshi* (the hereditary 'king-maker') his 'own' ritual is performed, and at the death of the *Samaza* (a non-hereditary rank), the masked ceremonial *elo*, which is in the charge of that elder. In neither case are the two men or their families excluded from the *gunnu*. Thus, as regards the Jebba version of that custom, I can only conclude that it represents an isolated attempt, neither thorough nor ultimately successful, to divide two of the main rituals evenly among the community. And this seems consistent with the general predilection of the Nupe for dichotomous arrangements.

(ii) *Movable Rituals*

A novel characteristic of these rites in Jebba is that they can be performed also at the request of individuals, even of strangers and non-Nupe, who wish to invoke the powerful 'magic' of the island or have been advised by diviners to do so. Indeed, the movable rituals are meant to benefit a much larger population, that is, all the groups living on the river. The *ketsá* sacrifice, more particularly, has made Jebba Island almost a place of pilgrimage.

The man in charge of the *ketsá* is called *Ndádoro*, 'Father of *doro*' (which is another name for the ritual). A priest in the strict sense of the word, like the *Ndazo*, he also walks about bareheaded and always wears 'ritual' dress. The *Ndádoro* I knew was old and blind, so that his actual duties fell to his son and future successor, though the father would still lend his presence and authority to the ritual performance.

There is a story connected with the origin of the ritual. Once a disastrous flood of the Niger destroyed all houses and farms and brought famine to the river valley. The *Kuta* at Muregi, the chief of the 'Downstream Kede', had learned from Tsoede how to combat floods and prevent their recurrence. Following this advice, the

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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unique in Nupe religious practice.[1] First, water is sprinkled on the ground and a little beer poured out; immediately afterwards the priest kills a white cock, cutting off its head and letting the blood drip on the earth. The head of the cock is left lying there while the body is taken away to be cooked later in the evening. Before the meal, in which only the elders share, a further offering of a few morsels of the meat is placed before the bronze figures. During each offering the *Ndàce* utters this brief prayer—'God, may the town have health; may the (several) towns prosper; may the women bear children; the children, may they be plentiful.[2] The killing of the cock concludes the sacrifice proper: what follows is '*dzodzo*', '*jí raha*', mere 'playing' and 'merry-making'.

Even during the sacrifice an old woman and later an old man did a few dance steps. Afterwards more old women (bareheaded like the men) and all the old men, carrying their staves, join. Even very old men, who can hardly stand on their legs, try a few shaky steps. Later still, young women and girls form a ring round the musicians, singing and swaying rhythmically with the music without moving from the place; this motion is called the 'dance of the female bronze figure'. The two sexes never truly join in the dance; for the younger men do not dance at all, and the girls keep to themselves. Only old men and old women dance together, occasionally holding hands and behaving with jocular amourousness, almost like grandfather and grandmother remembering their youth; some such comments in fact come from the onlookers, who are greatly amused seeing 'the old people playing young couples'. Throughout, the dance is strikingly calm; nor is there any time for a more excited mood to gather force, for at dusk, after three hours, the ceremonial comes to an end. The songs sung at the *dzakó* are irrelevant little ditties, which have no bearing on the ritual.

About the *gunnu* I can be brief. I saw it in its small-scale version, as part of the funerary rites for the *Ejukó* who died during my stay in Jebba. It included only the sacrifice of a fowl (on the village dancing ground), the mixed dance, and the playing of the *gunnu* drums; the young men carried their whips, and the dance was a close replica of the one in Doko, though the funeral version omits the sexual taboo and loses much of the hectic excitement typical of the true *gunnu*. From the description given me of the full-scale ritual I gather that it used to correspond closely to the one I saw elsewhere, being, however, more elaborate, comprising the vigil in the bush of the adolescents as well as the appearance of

[1] *Eba* divination provides the only parallel, the slab called 'man' lying to the right of the slab called 'woman'.

[2] The plural in the second sentence is unusual; it refers to all the 'towns of Tsoede', that is, to all the settlements on the river possessing Tsoede relics.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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the *ndakó gboyá*. As mentioned before, the practice was abandoned apparently in the early twenties. But it was since revived once, in 1931, at the death of the village chief, when even the *ndakó gboyá* society played its part (in spite of the official ban).

4. RITUAL AND CULTURE CHANGE

This seems an opportune place to consider the impact of changed conditions upon Nupe ritual, at least in its negative, disruptive aspects. The changes undergone by the Jebba rituals do not of course stand alone; in the last generation or two numerous pagan rituals all over Nupe country have been disappearing or have suffered more or less radical modifications. But the conditions in Jebba are in some respects unique and hence capable of illuminating factors and processes obscured elsewhere.

Let me, to begin with, say a few words about one of the abandoned Jebba rituals, the *sokokó*, whose name suggests a ceremonial of uncommon importance. It belonged to the cycle of rites performed in the 9th month; it was concerned with fertility, health, and prosperity in general and centred upon a sacrifice performed on the top of a hill overlooking the river valley. It is said to have been discontinued in 1914, when the residence of the Governor was built on the site of the sacrifice.

Now, similar reasons, similarly fortuitous, are also quoted in connection with certain other changes of ritual practice. In each case, my informants maintained, the disappearance of the *bà žiko*, the 'black' or 'secret place', led to the disappearance of the respective ceremonial or at least to some radical change in the observance. It is true that the place formerly chosen for the esoteric part of the *dzakó*, which used to lie on an uninhabited bank of the river, is today occupied by a riverside camp of Hausa fishermen; the old *gunnu* grove and the place in the bush where the *mamma* masks used to dress in secrecy have similarly lost their former seclusion, being now close to crowded thoroughfares. Yet it is equally true that suitable adjustments could be made: the *dzakó* is still regularly performed, with a programme only slightly changed; the *mamma*, though performed irregularly, has suffered this change for different reasons, and the masked dancers can still dress in secrecy, now in the privacy of an elder's house. Only the observance of the *gunnu* has been altered in a more far-reaching manner. These facts bear out a point made previously, that sacred places and the like are of relatively little importance in Nupe religion. If, then, a ritual is abandoned altogether or radically modified, this must be due to factors other than the loss of the customary locality and seclusion, inconvenient though the loss might be.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954.
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The number as well as the scale of the funerary rites vary with the age, sex, and status of the deceased. The full series is performed only for married men; in the case of old men who are not survived by widows the last ritual is omitted. Children, young men who are as yet unmarried, and most women are accorded only the Eight Days; only old women, married or widowed, who hold the position of *nūsako* (the 'Great-old-one') are entitled also to the Forty Days. This position goes to an eldest surviving sister in the oldest generation, and the nature of this qualification, referring as it does to the woman's own descent and not to her status by marriage, is also reflected in the arrangement of the ceremonials; for in the case of widows who returned to their own family after the husband's death (as many do), both rites take place in that house; while if the woman died in her husband's house, the Eight Days is performed there, and the Forty Days in the house of her kin. Differences of age and kinship position also determine the burial proceedings and the choice of the burial place. Old men and family heads, and old women, are buried in their sleeping huts, beneath the floor, and a sacrifice is performed over the grave; everyone else is buried, without special ceremony, in the space between huts or by the compound wall, or perhaps in a disused, roofless hut. At the death of old people, finally, the Eight Days' and Forty Days' rites include (among pagans) drumming, singing, and dancing, while this festive aspect is absent in the case of younger people; for their death makes 'the heart ache', while old people 'have seen the world', and there is no cause for grief.[1]

At the death of chiefs or priests the performance of the particular *kuti* they 'owned' may replace the funerary rites of the Eight Days and Forty Days. Similarly, the hunters will perform their own rituals on these occasions. But the rules differ widely; in some communities, as we know, the *gunnu* is the ritual appropriate to the funeral of chiefs and elders. Whichever solution is adopted, the combination of the funeral ceremonial with a fully-fledged *kuti* once more exemplifies the Nupe view of death as warranting the heaviest ceremonial.

The general rules are further modified when the death has been

[1] The qualification of old age cannot be stated more precisely. Old women who do not also hold the position of *nūsako* are sometimes treated like younger people. And in the case of men one always considers these three things—ripe age; possession of an elder's rank and title; and headship of the family. When these three qualifications coincide, there can be no doubt as to the appropriate ceremonial, burial place, and so forth. When only one or the other applies, there is some latitude, the final decision depending mainly on practical considerations, such as the economic position of the family and the likely number of mourners. Thus the observances appropriate to 'old' people do not always form an unbroken series; a person may, for example, be buried in the sleeping hut, with a sacrifice, but without the subsequent festivities of the Eight Days or Forty Days.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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766 of an abnormal kind. Lepers, we remember, are buried in the bush, by the *Ndazo*; people who die of smallpox are buried in the normal manner, though their body is wrapped in dirty rags instead of a new piece of cloth, and there is no ceremonial or mourning. In most parts of Nupe death by lightning does not affect the ceremonial; but in the north and east, apparently under Gwari influence, such persons are buried by the priests of the *sogba* cult, which flourishes in Gwari country.[1] When a person dies on the farm or in one of the outlying hamlets, the body is taken to the village for burial, and all ceremonies are performed there. A person who dies on a journey or in another part of the country is buried locally, without ceremony, all the rites being performed at his or her home; but if the deceased's kinsfolk are not certain that he has been buried at all (say, in the case of people killed in the war), they will perform a fictitious burial with a shroud representing the body. Criminals who have been executed used to be buried, without rites, by the executioners; but in the case of unconvicted criminals, even if they are known to have been guilty of the most hideous crimes, the usual ceremonial is observed: as moral depravity does not count in the beyond, so it ceases to be important on the threshold.

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764 Let me begin with a few words on the technique of burial. The grave is oblong, square, and shallow, only about two feet below the ground. There are no marks on the grave; on the contrary, the ground is carefully levelled and repaired so that it looks like any other place. If the grave is inside a sleeping hut, the latter remains in use after the burial, the same hut often containing two or three graves of successive inhabitants. The body is placed in the grave lying on its side, 'as though asleep', and, among Mohammedans, facing east. The grave chamber is kept clear of earth by a roof of wooden beams, covered with a white grass mat; the body rests on another mat of the same kind. Among Mohammedans, fresh leaves and boughs are in addition scattered over the floor and roof of the grave chamber.[2] The grave-diggers are called *goro*, and are charged also with preparing the body and performing a first sacrifice over the grave. Their duties, ritual already in their secrecy, are usually hereditary in certain families which hold no other religious function. Among Mohammedans the body is prepared by four male or female relatives, according to the sex of the deceased, and mallams are grave-diggers.

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[1] See below, p. 211.

[2] I was told of an older form of burial, in which the grave chamber is dug into the side of a circular shaft five to six feet deep. This practice has now disappeared, though the people of Doko assured me that chiefs would still be buried in this fashion. I have seen burials of this kind only in the neighbouring country of Gwari.

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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the responsibility of the *sogba* cult. Also, when such children grow up and marry they will as a matter of course invoke the *sogba* sacrifice, so that their union might be similarly blessed. The same idea, of the special protection enjoyed by *sogba* children, is expressed in this at first glance incongruous fashion: *sogba* children, even as adults, may help themselves with impunity to food and things of small value from any trader on the market. If we call this practice a 'licensed theft', we can see an oblique logical connection between this impunity and that other function of the cult, the punishment of thieves.

So much for the observances in the Gwari (or Nupe-Gwari) communities. The Nupe attitude towards the cult as such and towards the annual ceremonial is one of mild curiosity or indifference: they are, for the Nupe, merely the peculiar customs of 'foreigners'. Nor has the use of the *sogba* ritual for the purpose of inflicting supernatural punishment spread to the rest of the country. This may seem puzzling; for though the Nupe have their own ordeals to bring to justice criminals who deny their guilt, this method can only be applied when suspicion has already fastened upon a person; and though the Nupe possess their deadly *cigbe* against burglars and evil-wishers, these act merely as means of protection which must be acquired beforehand. As for the magic punishment of unknown offenders after the event, the supernatural armoury of Nupe appears to lack such means. Even so, this aspect of the *sogba* cult has not been utilized. I can suggest only this reason: such punishments after the event, placed within the power of the wronged person, come very close to personal vengeance; which is utterly foreign to the legal conceptions of the Nupe. As their elaborate judicial machinery precludes all secular self-help, so it would seem to preclude also this option of supernatural vengeance.

[766] At the same time the Nupe in the neighbourhood of villages possessing the *sogba* cult claim that they now call in the *sogba* priest to bury persons killed by lightning. Since this obviously happens only rarely, the practice can have no great weight in the religious life of the people; nor can I be certain that it is followed regularly. Yet several Nupe sections, and not only those which [821] have adopted this special burial custom, also share, if more vaguely, the Gwari belief that death by lightning may be a punishment for theft.[1] The Nupe who adopted the burial custom, then, have seized upon a religious practice which seemed to fit conveniently their own mystic ideas or fears.

The most thorough adoption concerns the use of the *sogba* ritual as a remedy for barrenness. Numerous Nupe women, from

[1] See above, p. 33.

585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[12]

Divorce

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 837] seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

Burial

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual " owned " by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the " eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the " eight days " feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the " eight days " and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 184 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a " pious offering " to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[12] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion. 643

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women. 671 696 [584 672]

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any term up to four years. 685 [935] 683

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried the bodies, unless the families sent for them. 696 [86]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband. 684 [542] 586

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4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witch-dom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.